

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ITF-05 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01 OPR-02

A-01 AID-05 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3593

INFO CINCPAC

CINCPACREPHIL SUBIC

CDR 13TH AF CLARK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 6887

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF RP

SUBJ: PRESS TREATMENT OF RECENT EVENTS IN INDOCHINA AND VN
EVACUATION

REF: MANILA 6368

BEGIN SUMMARY: SINCE END OF APRIL, GOVT CONTROLLED PRESS HAS
PROPAGATED RELATIVELY RESPONSIBLE ASSESSMENT OF EVENTS IN SEA
WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS. THOUGH
REPORTAGE HAS BEEN VOLUMINOUS, WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY RELA-
TIVE PAUCITY OF EDITORIAL COMMENT ON SIGNIFICANCE OF INDOCHINA
DEBACLE FOR GOP AND SUSPECT THIS REFLECTS GOP'S OWN UNCER-
TAINTY ON THIS SCORE. NEVERTHELESS CERTAIN THEMES HAVE BECOME
EVIDENT. THESE ARE: A) EVENTS IN SEA PROVE MARCOS WAS CORRECT
IN CALLING FOR REASSESSMENT OF GOP RELATIONS WITH US AND FOR
NATIONAL POLICY OF SELF-RELIANCE, B) SOME NEW REGIONAL SECUR-
ITY ARRANGEMENT IS NECESSARY, AND C) CLOSURE OF U.S. BASES
WOULD NOT REPRESENT ECONOMIC DISASTER FOR PHILIPPINES. AT
OUTSET REPORTAGE AND EDITORIAL COMMENT ON VN REFUGEE MOVEMENT
THROUGH PHILIPPINES WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HARDNOSED WITH
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PRESS STRESSING THAT GOP'S ACTION ON REFUGEES INDICATED

USG COULD NO LONGER TAKE PHILIPPINES FOR GRANTED. LATER, HOWEVER, THIS HARD LINE GAVE WAY TO MORE APOLOGETIC LINE WHICH SUGGESTED GOP DISCOMFORT THAT ITS RHETORIC ON REFUGEES AT VARIANCE WITH NATIONAL REPUTATION FOR HOSPITALITY AND COMPASSION. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES OVERVIEW OF PRESS TREATMENT OF EVENTS IN SEA, REFUGEE EVACUATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD US SINCE FALL OF SAIGON. END SUMMARY

1. SOMEWHAT UNFOCUSED ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN IN PRESS BEGAN TO TAPER OFF FOLLOWING PRES MARCOS' APR 28 SPEECH TO TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE ON LABOR CODE IN WHICH HE SUGGESTED US AND PHILIPPINES COULD SIT DOWN AND COME UP WITH AGREEMENTS WHICH WOULD SATISFY BOTH PARTIES (MANILA 5573). FALL OF SAIGON AND SUBSEQUENT REFUGEE EVACUATION VIA CLARK AND SUBIC DOMINATED PHIL PRESS BUT THERE WERE RELATIVELY FEW EDITORIALS ON WHAT IT ALL MEANT. PRESUMABLY THIS REFLECTED MARCOS' OWN UNCERTAINTY ON HOW COLLAPSE OF US-INDOCHINA POLICY WOULD IMPACT ON GOP. DESPITE THIS UNCERTAINTY, A TONE OF SELF-CONGRATULATION WAS EVIDENT IN SOME REPORTING. IT WAS POINTED OUT MARCOS' CALL FOR REASSESSMENT OF US-GOP RELATIONS AND HIS INCREASING EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE HAD PRECEDED FALL OF VIETNAM. EVENTS WERE NOW SHOWING WISDOM OF HIS MOVE. THERE WAS ALSO A NOTE OF CAUTION. THE TIMES JOURNAL ON MAY 7 OPINED "THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THAT WE PRESS WHATEVER ADVANTAGE MAY HAVE ACCRUED TO US AS A RESULT OF THE SAD OUTCOME OF AMERICA'S ADVENTURE IN INDOCHINA." NEVERTHELESS, THE EDITORIALIST CONTINUED, "THE AMERICANS CANNOT VERY WELL IGNORE THE PHILIPPINES' STRATEGIC LOCATION IF THEY ARE TO PRESERVE THE CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THEY HAVE IN THIS PART OF THE GLOBE."

2. NEW REGIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENT NECESSARY: EDITORIALISTS AND COLUMNISTS WERE LESS CERTAIN ON EXACTLY WHERE ALL THIS MIGHT BE LEADING. IN MAY 2 EDITORIAL "NEW ASIAN POLICY" EXPRESS PROPOSED THAT ALLIES MUST NOW STATE THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS ON "WHAT THEY EXPECT US TO DO IN THEIR BEHALF UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHAT THEY DO NOT LIKE THE US TO DO UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES." EXPRESS COLUMNIST BATALLA SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS THE JAPANESE DIPLOMATIC MODEL MIGHT WELL BE

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THE ANSWER FOR MOST OF EAST ASIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE, I.E., FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL. TIMES JOURNAL COLUMNIST CRUZ WROTE THAT ONLY THING CERTAIN WAS THAT A "MILITARY ALLIANCE BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS OF VASTLY DIFFERENT CAPABILITIES ENDS IN DISASTER FOR THE WEAKER POWER." ASSUMING US WOULD BE LESS INVOLVED IN ASIA, EXPRESS EDITORIALIST ON MAY 7 IN PIECE ENTITLED "AN AFTERMATH OF INDOCHINA" INDICATED ASEAN NATIONS MUST NOW TAKE "LONG

SECOND LOOK" AT PRG. "THE EROSION OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE HAS REQUIRED REAPPRAISAL OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ASEAN MEMBERS AND CHINA, AND THIS MIGHT IN THE LONG RUN GIVE THE REGION THE PEACE AND STABILITY WHICH HAVE ELUDED IT FOR COUNTLESS YEARS. EXPRESS EDITORIAL PROPOSAL WAS FOR PRC GUARANTEE TO ASEAN MEMBERS TO RESPECT THEIR BORDERS "COUPLED WITH A GUARANTEE FROM THE UNITED STATES AND THE OTHER SUPERPOWER, RUSSIA, THAT THEY WILL STAY OUT OF THE REGION RESPECTING THE WILL TO LIVE AND LET LIVE OF THE ASEAN NATIONS. EXPRESS EDITORIALIST REITERATED THIS THEME MAY 14 AS ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MET IN KL. SUCH A GUARANTEE WOULD MEAN "NO MORE INDOCHINAS."

3. GOP TREATMENT OF VN REFUGEES SHOWS US CAN'T TAKE GOP FOR GRANTED: INITIAL REPORTAGE ON REFUGEE EVACUATION TO AND FROM CLARK AND SUBIC WAS TRUCULENT. PRESS STRESSED GOP'S EFFORT TO ASSERT ITS PREROGATIVES AND PLAYED UP US "VIOLATIONS" OF UNDERSTANDINGS WITH PHILS, WHILE LAUDING POSITIVE US ACTIONS RESULTING FROM STRONG POSITIONS TAKEN BY DFA AND PMLOS AT BASES ON VIOLATIONS. TIMES JOURNAL EDITORIALIST NOTED MAY 7: "AMERICANS APPEAR NO LONGER INCLINED TO TAKE US FOR GRANTED" AND THIS TAKES NOTHING MORE THAN "STRONG RESOLVE ON OUR PART." THERE WAS EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF FORMER PM KY AND STATEMENTS HE WOULD BE ARRESTED IF HE APPEARED. WHEN KY ARRIVED AND DEPARTED IN A TRICE, ONE PAPER HEADLINED ITS ACCOUNT "US HUSTLES CAO KY OUT OF SUBIC" THEREBY PREVENTING "DIPLOMATIC CLASH." TIMES JOURNAL COLUMNIST SUYKO TERMED INCIDENT EXAMPLE OF NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN "A FULLY LIBERATED PHILIPPINE GOVT AND THE ONCE POWERFUL USA." TJ COLUMNIST ATTRIBUTED THIS BOLDNESS IN IMPLEMENTING "AN INVIGORATED AND INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY" TO VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN PERSONNEL IN DFA WHO HAD REFUSED TO BE "BAMBOOZLED" BY US AUTHORITIES. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. GOP DISCOMFORT AT BEING CONSIDERED INHOSPITABLE: PRESS GAVE STRAIGHTFORWARD TREATMENT TO GOP REFUSAL ALLOW FOREIGN FLAG SHIPS WITH VN REFUGEES DISCHARGE THEM HERE. IN EFFORT BALANCE THIS INHOSPITALITY, PRESS PLAYED UP TREATMENT GIVEN VN REFUGEE DEPENDENTS OF FILIPINO CITIZENS WHO HAD ARRIVED HERE BY SHIP FROM VIETNAM AND PRESIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ITF-05 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01 OPR-02

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R 201000Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3594

INFO CINCPAC

CINCPACREPHIL SUBIC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 6887

E.O. 11652: GDS

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DECISION PERMIT AT LEAST 1000 VN REFUGEES REMAIN IN
PHILIPPINES. INDICATION THAT SOME FELT UNCOMFORTABLE WITH
"HARD-NOSED" ROLE GOP HAS STAKED OUT FOR ITSELF WAS COMMENT
BY TJ COLUMNIST CRUZ ON MAY 7. "IT IS NOT AS THOUGH WE
WERE KOWTOWING TO WINNERS OR KICKING LOSER ASIDE".
CHARACTERISTICALLY AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO BLAME US FOR LAPSE
IN NATIONAL CHARACTER. MAY 5 DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIALIST
SUGGESTED "HEARTBREAK, MISUNDERSTANDING AND CHAOS ATTENDING
THE ENTIRE BUSINESS COULD HAVE BEEN AVERTED HAD THE US BEEN
A LITTLE MORE CANDID IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS ALLIES IN
ASIA." ORIENT NEWS EDITORIAL OF MAY 1 ENTITLED "BETRAYALS
OF FAITH" STATED THAT WHILE PHILIPPINES HAS CHARACTERICALLY
EXTENDED "WARM HAND OF HOSPITALITY AND COMPASSION" IT WAS
TIME THAT "WE ASSERTED OUR OWN RIGHTS TO AND TEMPER OUR
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MERCY HENCEFORTH WITH THE HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS OF
OUR OWN DIGNITY AND HONOR."

5. REFUGEE POLICY ADDED CUBITS TO GOP'S STATURE: EDITORIAL IN TIMES JOURNAL MAY 12 REVEALS AWARENESS GOP STRONGLY CRITICIZED FOR LACK OF HOSPITALITY TO REFUGEES BUT STATES BENEFITS ACCRUING TO REFUGEE POLICY PROVED ITS CORRECTNESSN "THE NO-NONSENSE HANDLING OF THE REFUGEE CASES BY THE PHILIPPINES, TO BE SURE, PROVOKED DICISIONS FROM CERTAIN FAWNING QUARTERS, BUT ON THE WHOLE IT WON FOR THIS COUNTRY TREMENDOUS REGARD AND RESPECT. SUDDENLY, IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO COUNT, THE PHILIPPINES HAS RISEN TEN FEET TALL." THE ORIENT NEWS OF MAY 11 HAD BEEN MORE DEFENSIVE: AL- THOUGH THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN STRICT WITH THE CASE OF FORMER OFFICIALS AND MILITARY OFFICERS, AS WELL AS SOLDIERS, OF THE DEFUNCT GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, IT COULD NOT BE SAID THAT WE HAD BEEN UNDULY HARSH TO THE EVACUEES AS A WHOLE."

6. VALENCIA ET AL: SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MAY, BULLETIN TODAY COLUMNIST VALENCIA, COUNTRY'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL, HAS EMPHASIZED US CONCERN FOR NATIONAL INTEREST AND NEED FOR GOP DISPLAY SIMILAR CONCERN. FOR LAVENCIA THE US' CON- CEPT OF FRIENDSHIP IS THE "DUTCH TREAT". VALENCIA PRAISED GOP'S DECISION TAKE A "HARD LINE" ON USE OF BASES FOR EVACUEES CLAIMING THIS INDICATES "WE ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO BE TOLD BY THE US WHAT TO TAKE AND WHAT TO SEE. PREVIOUSLY THE AMERICANS DID WHAT THEY PLEASED INSIDE THEIR MILITARY BASES WITHOUT EVER TELLING US AND WITHOUT ANY REGARD FOR WHAT IMPLICATIONS THESE THINGS HAVE ON OUR IMAGE AS AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY." ADDITIONALLY, VALENCIA LED OFF NEW SPATE OF NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIALS BY POOH-POOHING CONTRIBUTIONS OF BASES TO ECONOMY, VOLUNTEERING FOR GOOD MEASURE DUBIOUS BUT INTER- ESTING MORAL THESIS THAT CONVERSION OF BASES TO PHIL CONTROL WOULD MAKE HONEST WOMEN OUT OF SUBSTANTIAL BE IES OF PROSTITUTES INFESTING BASES CITIES. BALENCIA'S LINE SUBSEQUENTLY REINFORCED BY TEAMS OF PHIL CHAMER OF COM- MERCE HEADED BY FRED ELIZALDE WHO VISITED BASE CITIES "REASSURING" LOCAL BUSINESSMEN THAT THEY WOULD NOT SUFFER ECONOMICALLY BUT PROFIT IN LONG RUN FROM CONVERSION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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BASES. NEWS STORIES CITED POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF RURNING JOHN HAY AB INTO TOURIST RESORT AND RECREATION AREA, OF CONVERTING CLARK AB INTO VAST UNIVERSITY COMPLEX AND/OR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND SUBIC NB INTO COMMERCIAL SHIPYARD, HARBOR AND INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.

7. COMMENT: EADING OF PRESS OVER LAST TWO TURBULENT WEEKS SUGGESTS GOP IS STILL VERY UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHAT INDOCHINA CATACLYSM MEANS FOR PHILIPPINES, THE REGION AND THE UNITED

STATES. THERE IS STRONG PERCEPTION THAT SOME NEW REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM NECESSARY BUT LITTLE CERTAINTY OVER WHAT THIS MIGHT ENTAIL ALTHOUGH THERE IS VAGUE TALK OF A US AND SOVIET COMMITMENT NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE AREA AND PRC AGREEMENT TO RESPECT NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. PRESS MADE OVVIOUS EFFORT TRANSMOGRIFY GOP'S OCCASIONALLY CHURLISH CONDUCT DURING OUR REFUGEE EVACUATION INTO DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM US. EXPERIENCE IS BEING CITED AS PROOF US WILL RESPECT GOP AND NOT TAKE IT FOR GRANTED WHEN GOP TALKS TOUGH. WHILE THIS STANDARD FILIPINO JARGON UNDOUBTEDLY REPRESENTS ELEMENT OF GOP SENTIMENT AT THE TIME, ITS ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE IS NOT PREDICTABLE. ALSO UNCLEAR IS REAL EXTENT BEHIND NEW TACK ON VALUE OF BASES IN PHIL HANDS, WHICH COULD BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO GOP DESIRES COZY UP TO USSR, PRC, NEW INDOCHINAREGIMES AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, TO RAISE ANTE FOR BASES TALKS, OR MERELY TO REASSURE LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, WHO GENUINELY WORRIED AT PROSPECT US WITHDRAWAL OR PHIL TAKEOVER. UNDERLYING ALL OF THE REPORTAGE, EDITORIALS AND COLUMNS OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS, HOWEVER, IS PROFOUND SHOCK AT WHAT TRANSPIRED IN INDOCHINA. AS DOROY VALENCIA WROTE "SUPERMAN LOST. INCREDIBLE" HE FAILS TO MENTION THAT THE GOP MAY FIND THIS NEW REALITY HARDER TO COPE WITH THAN THE US. SULLIVAN

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